

Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000237

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Australia's skilled migration occupations list

Question

Given the department has responsibility for providing formal advice on Australia's skilled migration occupations lists and evaluating workforce trends, what impact does temporary skilled and unskilled migration have on Australia's labour market?

Answer

The National Skills Commission (NSC) is responsible for labour market analysis that informs the skilled migration occupations lists (SMOL) and the Priority Migration Skilled Occupations List (PMSOL). In combination, these lists target employer-sponsored skilled migration programs to future skill needs and to sectors that will support Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19.

Analysis by the NSC of Australian Bureau of Statistics' labour market data and Department of Home Affairs' visa data shows that over the longer-term, nationally the stock of primary temporary skill shortage (TSS) and subclass 457 visa holders has represented less than 1 per cent of employed persons in Australia. This reliance has declined since the April 2017 skilled visa reforms and has fallen further since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This analysis also shows that for most states and territories, the stock of primary TSS and subclass 457 visa holders comprise a low percentage of the employed workforce in skilled (managerial, professional, trade and technical) occupations.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000238

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Impact of temporary migration on employment prospects

Question

What evidence has the department collected, or research has it undertaken, into the impact of temporary migration on the employment prospects of Australians?

Answer

Analysis by the National Skills Commission (NSC) of Australian Bureau of Statistics' labour market data and Department of Home Affairs' visa data shows that over the longer-term, nationally the stock of primary temporary skill shortage (TSS) and subclass 457 visa holders has represented less than 1 per cent of employed persons in Australia.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000239

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Temporary migration - higher education sector

Question

How does temporary migration in Australia support the higher education sector?

a. How has higher education been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer

In 2019, international students represented 32 per cent of enrolments in higher education in Australia.

As of July 2020, international student enrolments decreased by 5 per cent in the higher education sector compared to July of the previous year.

Senate Select Committee on Temporary Migration

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 10 September 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000240

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Higher education providers and international students

Question

How is the department working with higher education providers and international students to ensure policy settings are appropriate during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer

International education is broader than higher education.

DESE coordinated and consulted with relevant international education stakeholders on COVID-19 in the following committees:

- The *Expert Members of the Council for International Education* including sector representatives have met seven times so far in 2020, with discussions including strategic responses to the challenges of COVID-19.
- The *Global Reputation Taskforce* was a Council initiative and comprised Expert Members, senior representatives from state, territory, Commonwealth governments as well as sector peak bodies and senior sector representatives. It met 18 times between February and June 2020 and delivered recommendations to the Minister, including on communication, enhancing the reputation of Australia, supporting student health and wellbeing, visa measures and supporting positive community sentiment.
- The *Education and Employment Sector Pandemic Preparedness Committee*, a group comprising state and territory education, and employment services policy representatives, as well as representatives from regulators and key sector bodies, which met weekly to share information on pandemic preparedness. It met 16 times between March and June 2020.
- The *National Coordination Mechanism* established under the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Emergency Management Australia/Crisis Coordination Centre of the Department of Home Affairs. In relation to education issues, it met three times between March and May 2020.
- The *Student Return Working Group*, which has guided the implementation of a travel restriction exemption allowing Year 11 and 12 students from China to travel to and quarantine in Australia. It met 13 times between February and May 2020.

DESE also participates in or, as required, convenes other meetings with specific stakeholders / stakeholder groups.

For students, DESE established on 1 February 2020 the International Students Hotline and mailbox through which they can seek information on COVID-19 international education related matters.

DESE website updates and factsheets

DESE has provided affected international students and international education providers with up-to-date information and policy advice on the DESE COVID-19 specific website www.dese.gov.au/covid-19.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000241

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students

Question

What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students in Australia?

- a. What support has been offered to international students during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- b. Has the department assessed the impact of these additional support services to identify those that could be extended beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer

Please refer to IQ20-00039 on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on international student enrolments.

International students have been eligible to access support totalling more than \$1.5 billion from the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and education providers.

Informational detailing support for international students can be found at

<https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/English/student-support>.

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the *ESOS Act 2000*, is working to ensure that education providers deliver a quality education and student experience for international students both through the COVID-19 outbreak, and into the future. For specific analysis on the delivery of additional support services to international students, the department would refer to state and territory governments, education providers, and organisations delivering this additional support to international students.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000242

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Permanent migration options

Question

Submissions from Australia's higher education sector have stressed the importance of permanent migration options as a key factor for international students when considering a study destination. Has the department done any work with the Department of Home Affairs in regards to permanent migration policy settings for international students?

Answer

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment works closely with the Department of Home Affairs on policy settings relating to international students, including permanent migration.

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Inquiry into Temporary Migration - 10 September 2020

Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000243

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Skilled migration occupation lists

Question

In September 2019, the department commenced a review of the skilled migration occupation lists. Submissions to the review closed in February 2020. What is the status of the review? When do you expect the review to be completed?

Answer

In light of the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the skilled migration occupation list (SMOL) review process which commenced in September 2019 has been put on hold.

The details of the next review process will be published on the website of the National Skills Commission which is responsible for the labour market analysis and stakeholder consultation that will inform future updates to the SMOL.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

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Outcome: Employment

Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000244

Senator Raff Ciccone provided in writing.

Seasonal Worker Programme

Question

Visa conditions for the Seasonal Worker Programme have been relaxed to allow workers to extend their stay for up to one year. An extension is subject to Seasonal Worker approved employers engaging with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment on labour market testing to ensure Australian jobseekers are given the opportunity to work. How many extensions have been requested and approved by the department?

Answer

With regard to the visa numbers, the Department of Home Affairs has provided the following response:

As at 27 September 2020, 5,969 applications have been lodged for the Australian Government Endorsed Event 'COVID-19 Pandemic event' (subclass 408) visa for Seasonal Worker Programme workers in Australia. Of these, 4,843 were granted visas.